

Message Text

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ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:EUR/EE:KNBROWN
APPROVED BY:EUR: JAARMITAGE
EUR/CE:KKURZE
S/S-O:PERITO

-----080981 070511Z /10

R 070431Z JUL 77 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

S E C R E T STATE 157298

NODIS

FOLLOWING BONN 10177 SENT ACTION SECSTATE JUNE 17, 1977
REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

S E C R E T BONN 10177

NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (SCHMIDT, HELMUT), SOPN, OGEN, PFOR, GW
SUBJECT: SCHMIDT'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON; HIS CONCERN
ABOUT RFE/RL

1. AT A LUNCHEON HE GAVE FOR NEW AMBASSADORS JULY 15,
I TALKED WITH CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT PRIVATELY ABOUT HIS
TRIP TO WASHINGTON IN JULY.

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2. HE SAID HE LOOKED FORWARD TO ANOTHER GENERAL REVIEW
WITH THE PRESIDENT OF MOST OF THE SUBJECTS THEY HAD
TOUCHED ON IN LONDON. THE NUCLEAR QUESTION, OF COURSE,
WOULD BE ONE OF THE ITEMS. HE HOPED THE SEVEN-NATION
STUDY WOULD GO WELL, BUT WAS CONCERNED ABOUT
DIFFICULTIES THE FRENCH MIGHT CAUSE. SCHMIDT ALSO

NOTED BRIEFLY THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE, WHICH HE THOUGHT HAD BEEN "CLEARED UP" IN LONDON, SEEMS TO HAVE ARISEN AGAIN. HOWEVER, HE HOPED THINGS WOULD CALM DOWN AND THAT BELGRADE WOULD GO REASONABLY WELL. (HE WAS NOT SPECIFIC IN HIS REMARKS, BUT HE MAY HAVE BEEN REFERRING TO RECENT HIGH-LEVEL US STATEMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS. A JAMES RESTON COLUMN CARRIED IN THE PARIS HERALD TRIBUNE JUNE 16 CITES GERMAN CONCERNS IN THIS REGARD AND WAS WRITTEN AFTER RESTON HAD SEEN THE CHANCELLOR.)

3. THE MAIN THING ON SCHMIDT'S MIND, HOWEVER, WAS RFE/RL AND THE US INTENTION TO INSTALL NEW, MORE POWERFUL TRANSMITTERS AT THE SITE NEAR MUNICH. HE SAID THIS WAS A MATTER HE PLANNED TO TAKE UP WITH THE PRESIDENT. HE REGRETTED THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN CONSULTED ABOUT THE DECISION ON THE TRANSMITTERS AND SAID HE HAD ORDERED THAT ISSUANCE OF THE REQUIRED FRG LICENSE FOR INSTALLATION OF THE TRANSMITTERS BE HELD UP PENDING HIS PERSONAL REVIEW. IT WAS POSSIBLE, HE SAID, THAT HE WOULD NOT APPROVE THE LICENSE.

4. SCHMIDT SAID HE WAS PLACED IN AN UNCOMFORTABLE POSITION BY RFE/RL; THE STATIONS WERE ON FRG TERRITORY, BUT HE HAD NO CONTROL OVER THE CONTENT OF THEIR BROADCASTS. WHILE HE HAD NOT BEEN PRESSED RECENTLY BY THE
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SOVIETS ON THE SUBJECT, IT WAS LIKELY THAT BREZHNEV WOULD RAISE IT WHEN HE CAME TO BONN IN THE FALL. SCHMIDT SAID HE HAD TOLD THE PREVIOUS US ADMINISTRATION THAT HE EXPECTED THE STATIONS TO BE PHASED OUT WITHIN TWO OR THREE YEARS, BUT THINGS SEEMED TO BE GOING IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION.

5. I TOLD SCHMIDT THAT WE ATTACHED GREAT IMPORTANCE TO RFE/RL. THE LOCATION OF THE TRANSMITTERS IN GERMANY WAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE IN TERMS OF REACHING THE TARGET AUDIENCES AND I THOUGHT IT WOULD HAVE MOST UNFORTUNATE IMPLICATIONS IF THE OPERATIONS OF THE RADIOS WERE LIMITED. I STRESSED THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL INTEREST IN RFE/RL AND SAID I WAS SURE HE WOULD WISH TO CONSIDER SCHMIDT'S VIEWS CAREFULLY. SCHMIDT SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE MISSION OF THE RADIOS BUT WONDERED IF IT MIGHT NOT BE FEASIBLE FOR THE BROADCASTS TO BE CARRIED OUT SOMEWHERE ELSE THAN IN THE FRG.

6. COMMENT: THERE HAVE BEEN EARLIER INTIMATIONS OF SCHMIDT'S RESERVATIONS ABOUT RFE/RL, BUT HIS COMMENTS

TO ME ARE MORE SPECIFIC THAN ANYTHING WE HAVE HAD BEFORE. I SERIOUSLY DOUBT IF HE WOULD GO SO FAR AS TO DENY THE LICENSE FOR THE NEW TRANSMITTERS OR PUSH FOR REMOVAL OF THE STATIONS FROM THE FRG, SINCE SUCH ACTIONS WOULD EXPOSE HIM TO A STORM OF CRITICISM FROM THE OPPOSITION. HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR HE IS IRRITATED BY THE LACK OF CONSULTATION CONCERNING THE TRANSMITTERS AND THAT IT IS HIS PRESENT INTENTION TO RAISE THE QUESTION DIRECTLY WITH THE PRESIDENT.

7. IN ADDITION TO READYING OUR POSITIONS ON THE RADIOS IN ANTICIPATION OF A POSSIBLE DISCUSSION WHEN SCHMIDT IS IN WASHINGTON, IT OCCURS TO ME THAT IT MIGHT BE USEFUL IN DEFUSING THE SITUATION IF THE
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PRESIDENT COULD COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY AND INFORMALLY WITH SCHMIDT ABOUT IT BEFORE THEIR MEETING. IF THE PRESIDENT HAS OCCASION TO TELEPHONE THE CHANCELLOR ON OTHER MATTERS, A BRIEF REFERENCE TO THE RADIO/TRANSMITTER PROBLEM AND AN EXPRESSION OF READINESS TO DISCUSS THE CHANCELLOR'S CONCERNS FRANKLY COULD BE HELPFUL. STOESSEL UNQUOTE VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, HUMAN RIGHTS, VISITS, CAT-B, HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS, RADIO BROADCASTING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Jul-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE157298
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EUR/EE:KNBROWN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: N770004-0160
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770782/aaaactey.tel
Line Count: 143
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2054a66f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1935710
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SCHMIDT'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON; HIS CONCERN ABOUT RFE/RL
TAGS: OVIP, SOPN, OGEN, PFOR, ETEL, GE, US, (SCHMIDT, HELMUT)
To: WARSAW MOSCOW
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2054a66f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009